



Egypt

Egypt is located in north-eastern Africa and includes the Sinai Peninsula, the only land bridge between Africa and Asia. Most of Egypt's population inhabits the banks of the Nile River. Egypt is famous for its ancient civilization and some of the world's most stunning ancient monuments, including the Giza Pyramids, Karnak Temple and the Valley of the Kings. Egypt's history is one of the richest, oldest and most varied in the world. Throughout its history, Egypt has been exposed to many great civilizations and many cultures.



Family Life

In Egypt, grandparents may live in the home with the parents and children, and in many cases, extended families live in one building, but separate apartments. In Egypt, the main meal is lunch, not dinner. Meals may be eaten together or separately, but on weekends or holidays most families gather for a meal, often including the extended family. It is common in Egypt for both parents to work; mothers give extra care to the kids. Fathers are the authority figures, especially when it comes to major decisions and they are treated formally and with respect. Mothers are responsible for household and everyday matters and are equally respected, but may be spoken to more informally.

It is common in Egypt for family members to have their own interests, but not keep to themselves for a long time as that behavior could be thought of as inconsiderate. Personal space is not a common concept for Egyptians in general, especially within the family. Family members and close friends are expected to know nearly everything about each other, even very personal information. Also, Egyptians do not keep a distance while talking to someone; the distance between two people talking together is normally tight, especially if they are of the same gender.

Teen Life: Siblings share almost everything in Egypt, like clothes, mobile phones, and toiletries, and they do not necessarily ask for permission. In the U.S., Egyptian students may unintentionally invade the privacy or individual time of their host family based on the assumption that everything in the home is communal. Teenagers in Egypt usually share their plans with their parents and take their parents' opinion into account when making decisions. Generally, Egyptian teens are not very independent and they rely on their parents in most aspects of life. Students may initially seek guidance from their host family when planning their schedules and making daily decisions.

Responsibilities: The responsibility given to a teenager differs from one family to the other. In Egypt, students do not work and parents are responsible for paying for their children's clothes and personal items, as well as for extracurricular activities or hobbies. Many families in Egypt hire help, at least for cleaning. Gender differences play a role in household chores in Egypt. Women and girls take care of the household while men and boys normally take care of the errands outside the house. Most teenagers, regardless of their gender, are generally responsible for tidying up their room and taking care of their personal things. Parents usually provide either a weekly or monthly allowance to their children for snacks and social activities. Teenagers are generally tasked with managing their personal expenses according to their allowance.

Parental Involvement: Parents supervise younger children's internet use, limiting the time spent on the internet, but with a lot of flexibility. Egyptian students may find it difficult to limit their use of the internet in the U.S. Many Egyptian parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. When teens break rules, parents generally talk through the situation first to work things out, and let their child understand right versus wrong or what could have done differently. If the situation is repeated, parents may take disciplinary actions which may include being grounded or having mobile phone privileges taken away for a short period of time.

Pets: Pets are not common in Egypt and few families have cats or birds. Most Muslims do not like having dogs in the place of prayer and animals are generally not allowed in the house.



Personal Interactions

In Egypt, greeting someone you see every day is expected. Girls kiss cheeks, boys shake hands or kiss cheeks. Punctuality is not very important in Egypt. It is acceptable to be late for a meeting. Meetings generally start 10-15 minutes after the stated start time. Being late is not considered rude; 15-30 minutes late is acceptable and usually people won't apologize for being even 30 minutes late.

Mixed Gender Socializing: It is generally considered socially unacceptable for Egyptian teens to have friends of the opposite sex, especially when it comes to close relationships or one-on-one time. It can be acceptable for boys and girls to gather in large mixed groups.

Friendships: Egyptian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups and sometimes one-on-one. Egyptian teens think of peers as friends, the concept of friends is "people you know," and usually teens have from two to five very close friends. Teens make the most of their school or family connections when making friends; they also form friends through common activities. Sometimes Egyptian teenagers share money with each other. Borrowing money from friends is not a sensitive issue and the time allowed to repay the debt can be quite lengthy.

Communication Styles: Egyptians tend to communicate indirectly and are generally not comfortable expressing negative emotions to others. Being direct is considered rude and students tend to express their discomfort in an indirect way. Students may feel offended when people express their negative emotions towards them directly. If it is observed that the student is uncomfortable or is alienating themselves, this might mean that he or she has a problem that they are not talking about.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not important in Egyptian culture. An Egyptian may or may not make eye contact when speaking with another; either is okay and neither is considered rude.

Cairo

School



Classes: In Egypt, some schools are single-sex and some are co-ed. In co-ed schools, boys sit beside boys, and girls sit beside girls. Students remain in one classroom throughout the day with 35 to 50 students, and teachers rotate classrooms. In the national school system, the number of subjects studied each term varies according by grade level; students cannot choose classes as they are compulsory and assigned by track (literary or scientific). There is also a different daily schedule. Egyptian students are used to long hours of studying and memorization due to national rote learning. Typically, students are evaluated via monthly tests and final exams; class participation only counts for 5% of the final grade and homework is not compulsory.

School Relationships: The relationship between teachers and students is formal in Egypt. Upon the teacher's entrance to the classroom, the students stand up and greet him or her. A student may only call his or her teacher by a title followed by the first name, for example, Miss Sara.

Extracurricular Activities: Students mostly practice sports or personal hobbies in private sports clubs or specialized institutes outside of school; these are costly and not affordable to all.

School Rules and Attire: Most schools have a zero tolerance policy for cell phone usage in school and against fighting. High schools in Egypt have uniforms and students change out of their uniforms promptly upon returning home.

Returning from Exchange: The year students miss is a case by case situation, but in all cases students are required to return back with a school transcript stamped by the school and documented by the Egyptian consulate.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is not seen as a social event for Egyptian Muslims, but much more religious and focused on prayer. It is only during Ramadan and Eid when there are social aspects to Muslim holidays and usually family gatherings take place. For Egyptian Christians, the social aspect of religion is important, especially when going to church on weekends and for holidays.

Usually Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are occasions that are celebrated nationwide, both religiously and socially. Many family gatherings take place and Egyptian teenagers usually see their extended families several times, or get invited for iftar (meal signifying the end of fasting during Ramadan) by friends. Eid and iftar are important for Egyptian teenagers as they are considered the highlights of the year. Schools in Egypt close earlier during Ramadan so students get the chance to take nap after school.

Holidays: Other major holidays in Egypt include Eid al-Adha, it is a four-day holiday where Egyptians have a specific meal/dish and adult family members give teenagers and children money. Sham El Nessim is an ancient Egyptian holiday celebrating spring when specific dishes are eaten and people color eggs; usually families have contests for who has the most creative egg.

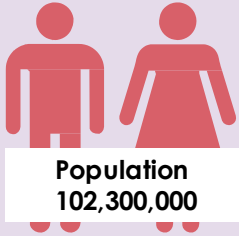
Guest Culture: In Egypt when someone comes to your home to visit it is very important to offer at least something to drink and the visitor should accept and, at a minimum, at least sample the items offered. It is important to offer several times. The guest is not expected to accept the drink or food the first time it is offered.

Lunch and Diets: Each family is different. Some families provide their children with a light meal, which is normally sandwiches upon their departure to school, and most probably this meal is prepared by the mother. Other families provide their children with money to buy something from school, and it will likely be a light meal like sandwiches or some snacks and something to drink. The meat in Egypt is always halal and most families prepare food from scratch, however some families eat packaged food and meals.

Personal Hygiene



In Egypt, boys take showers daily and girls believe that it is not healthy for their hair to wash it daily, so they might take showers every other day. The showers usually last between 15 to 30 minutes. Teenagers in Egypt leave their bathrooms clean, but not necessarily dry. Teens hang up their towels, however they're used to leaving their hygiene products in the bathroom. It is common for Egyptian teenagers to wear the same clothes for two consecutive days or twice without washing them, and it is not considered unclean.



Population
102,300,000



Square Miles
387,048

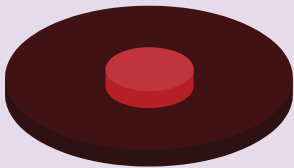


Currency
Egyptian Pound



Literacy rate
65.5%

Literacy rate
76.5%



Egyptian 91%
Other 9%

